





The Catholic Doctrine

ON

THE USE OF THE BIBLE.

BEING

A REVIEW OF HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP DIXON'S
"CATHOLIC INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE."

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BY

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THE following paper was published in the *Dublin Review*, with title of "THE BIBLE IN MAYNOOTH." As it entered, however, into general question of the duty or expediency of placing the Word of God promiscuously into the hands of everybody, it has been thought fit by several persons, that it might be useful to publish it as a tract. In doing this, it has been deemed expedient to republish only that part which bears upon that question, omitting whatever could only have a temporary or local interest.

Feb. 12, 1853.



THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON THE USE OF THE BIBLE.

(From the "*Dublin Review*," Vol. XXXIII. page 220.)

WHEN, a few years ago, we commenced a series of articles, in this Review, on Biblical subjects, we ventured to express ourselves as follows:—

"We regret to say that we have not an English Catholic elementary book of Biblical introduction...If Dr. Kenrick," (whose excellent work on the Gospels we were reviewing) "or any other sound theological scholar could sift the chaff from the wheat in modern scriptural writers, would supply the want to which we have alluded, he would confer a lasting advantage on our body."*

It is with sincere pleasure that we now announce the fulfilment of the wish thus expressed. Dr. Dixon has given us the first Catholic Introduction to Scripture, which has appeared in our language, and has performed his task in a manner that reflects high credit on the office which he holds, and the place in which he occupies it.†

Some consternation, indeed, this valuable work will cast into the enemy's camp. "What! is the Bible allowed to be read in Maynooth? Is there a course of reading, and a chair, of Scripture there? Why, this is more than we have in our universities!" Such exclamations may possibly be heard, when the Biblical Professor's work is first mentioned, in certain circles. But we have no doubt that the Maynooth outcry has effectually led many good people (elderly in particular), to the conviction, that awful discoveries are in store; whereby it will be shown, that the three hundred unfortunate monks, immured in Maynooth, are occupied for several years, in learning the many ways of breaking an oath, the mysteries of equivocation, the intricacies of disloyalty, and the niceties of discrimination, in matters to which we need not more definitely advert. Certainly all allusion to any other branches of education has there been studiously avoided; nor can it

* Dublin Review, Vol. XXVII. p. 182.

† Dr. Dixon was then Professor of H. Scripture in St. Patrick's R. College, Maynooth. He was shortly afterwards elevated to the Primatial See of Armagh.

possibly have occurred to the minds of readers on this lately absorbing to that after all said and done, Scripture is there read, Scripture is studied, Scripture is expounded. Now, if Scripture be the very essential of education, here it is ; as full, as extensive, as palpable as in Oxford, or at Trinity College. Again, if the reading of the Word be the antidote of every bad habit, the corrector of every error, the suggestor of every truth—why, Maynooth student has it as abundantly as the scholar at Cambridge or King's College.

We cannot indeed doubt, from the work before us, that the scriptural education of St. Patrick's College is both practical and solid. For Dr. Dixon assures us, that his "principal object has not been, to provide a book for the learned reader," but "to present to the intelligent Catholic public generally, a book wherein they might read, in plain and simple, and colloquial language, facts and doctrines, highly interesting to a Christian." (p. vii). Now, we have no hesitation in saying that, if in the present work, the professor has descended from his chair, to the level of ordinary information and abilities, we have a right to conclude, that when teaching his class, his lectures must be most erudite, and most instructive. For his Introduction shows him to be well acquainted with the whole range of biblical literature, ancient and modern, Catholic and heterodox, critical, hermeneutical, archaeological, and religious. From these sources he has drawn, judiciously and accurately, without servility in copying any one, and without confusion combining the labours of many. The work is divided into eighteen Dissertations, each of which is again subdivided into chapters, and sections. Each dissertation embraces one of the great topics of an "Introduction," such as the Canon, the Versions of Scripture, Hermeneutics, Biblical Criticism. It is not, indeed, to be expected, nor is it intended by the learned author, that each of these heads should exhaust the subject. Every one of them, indeed, any one of the chapters in the work, might easily become a theme for a separate volume. And, in fact, when one thinks of Bochart's folio on the Geography of Scripture, followed as it has been by endless additions from Reland, Michaëlis, and Rosenmüller ; of his Hierozoicon, in two folios treating only of the animals of Scripture ; of Scheuchzer's huge Phylologia Sacra, and Hiller's quarto Hierobotanicon, discussing its plants, not to speak of Niebuhr's travels, and other subsidiary works : when one contemplates the long series of folios that compose Ugolini's Thesaurus Antiquitatum filled only with Essays, and Dissertations on particular subjects, such as enter into the Introduction, and considers that it reaches not the proportions of our own age ; finally, not to be over-tedious, when one looks at the increasing stream of mere critical researches coming down from Morin and Capellus, to Kennicott, and De Rossi ; from Lambert Bos, to Holstenius and Parsons, from Simon to Griesbach, Mathæi, and Scholz, one can hardly conceive how such a mass of materials can be condensed, even by a step by step power if applicable, or distilled, or by any other process reduced, into the compass of two volumes. As far as it can be done, Dr. Dixon has done it most successfully. He indulges not in prolix disquisitions ; he does not overload his pages with references ; he avoids the appearance of learning ; he is thus able, in a very short space, to give what occupies whole chapters in other writers. Even supposing Horne's Introduction to be an orthodox work, we should give the preference to Dr. Dixon's, as more lucid, and

ple, more practical, and more useful. Indeed, Horne's compilation, full of strange contradiction, fallacious direction, and lumbering erudition, is far too bulky and heavy for a manuduction, and too incomplete for authority. It will neither begin, nor finish, the formation of a Biblical scholar. After reading a good introduction, simple and elementary, and mastering the first principles of each branch of the science, the aspirant of this character, must go at once to work, with the leading authorities on hand, following them, if possible, to the original sources, whence they derived their knowledge. If he aspires not so high, but only wishes to possess such preliminary knowledge, as may enable him to read the word of God with more instruction and edification; and if, for this purpose, he does not wish to learn the conflicting opinions of writers, and their grounds for them, but only to obtain simple information, then the Introduction before him is amply abundant, and will satisfy all his just desires.

We must not overlook one pleasing and useful characteristic of this work, and that is, its practical application of the principles laid down. Two instances have particularly gratified us. The subject of "Biblical Criticism" is closed by an example, which shows at once how important it is for popular controversy, and how it is to be employed. It is well known that the "Our Father," as recited by Catholics and Protestants, differs chiefly in the addition, by the latter, of what is called a doxology; "for Thine is the kingdom, &c." Now the example chosen by Dr. Dixon, to apply the rules of criticism is this clause. Is it really a part of Scripture, or is it an interpolation where it occurs, in St. Matthew? Dr. Dixon examines the evidences, first in favour of, and then against, the genuineness of the clause; and comes to the conclusion, that, as a part of Scripture, "the doxology in St. Matthew is spurious," (vol. i. p. 269.) We may observe that the most eminent editors of the New Testament, including Erasmus, Mill, Bengel, Wetstein, Griesbach, and Scholz, all, except the first and last, Protestants, reject the clause.

The second example, or illustration, which our learned author gives, is at the close of his Dissertation upon Hermeneutics. He selects it from the commandments delivered by God to the Jews. It is well known, that Protestants popularly charge us with suppressing the second commandment; in other words, they please to divide our first commandment into two, and to compress our two last into one. It is of no use arguing against this outrage on common sense, by showing that every word of the Ten Commandments is there, and that therefore, whatever may be the difference of arrangement, or rather of division, the substance and reality are the same. It goes on being repeated in pamphlet and fly-sheets, in speech and in sermon, in church and in meeting, to children and to old women, that the papists, shrinking before the prohibition to adore images, which of course they do, have boldly suppressed the second commandment, and divided the two last, to make up the number. The best way, no doubt, is to prove that we alone have preserved the true distribution of the decalogue, and this Dr. Dixon has very clearly done. He has given a full, learned, and acute discussion on the subject, which will well repay perusal. (pp. 356—367.)

We need not say that the learned professor is, throughout his work, eminently Catholic, and writes for Catholics. Thus he not only rejects the false and foolish theories of rationalistic interpretation, but he gives full

weight to, and copiously illustrates, the Great Catholic principle, of systematic and moral hermeneutics, tradition. (pp. 335, seqq.) He does merely prove the inspiration of Scripture on its only just ground, but shows that, out of the Catholic Church, it is impossible to demonstrate (pp. 9, seqq.) The Catholic Canon of Scripture is likewise vindicated. (pp. 26, seqq.) though we find no reference to the learned and conclusive work of Professor Vincenti, lately published at Rome, on this subject. In fact at the conclusion of the work, we have an ample catalogue of scriptural writers, Catholic and Protestant, in which the comparative merits of the two classes are ably, and satisfactorily, though succinctly, exhibited. (Vol. pp. 336—432.)

We are glad to find a Catholic, in these islands, take possession of ground, which belongs, of right, exclusively to us. We have allowed ourselves quite long enough to be thrown upon the defensive, and to be dragged into replies to impertinent questions, and into confutations of ground objections. Any Protestant, who may not understand three lines of what he reads, or who never takes up a Bible once a month, or who, if he reads, does so mechanically, without being able to give an intelligible explanation of a single passage; or who reading it, or not, does not put into practice one of its precepts; in fine, any one calling himself a Protestant, though heart not a Christian, considers himself entitled to say to any Catholic, from the peasant to the bishop: "Why do you not do as I do, make the Bible your rule of faith, and use the privilege of reading it, and judging for yourself?" Unfortunately a Catholic so interrogated feels that he has all his prejudices of the nation marshalled against him, only waiting his answer to rush upon him, through the indignation of his interrogator. He knows that it is already a foregone conclusion, that all religion consists in reading, or pretending to read, the Bible; that he who does not at least claim the privilege of reading it as he likes, though he may never use it, is something horrible, desperate, doomed to perdition; while he who boasts, and talks about it, though vicious in life, and grovelling in mind, secures some sort of religious pre-eminence here below, and has a passport for the sort of fool's paradise which he considers heaven to be. All this has long been decided by the newspapers, and by Exeter Hall, and no one is allowed to doubt it, without being stared out of countenance for a very infidel. The Catholic, therefore, often will not have the courage, or perhaps the hope of a hearing, to say, as he ought; "And pray, sir," (or "madam," as the case may be,) "what do you know about the Bible; or where did you get that book that you call by that name; or how do you know that it is the Bible at all?" Instead of this, he will join issue upon the question put to him, and assert, what no doubt is true, but is only leading his adversary further from the truth, that he individually, and many others, are allowed to read the Bible, and that our Church permits it.

We say that this leads the adversary further from the truth; for it gives him (if he believe you, which ten to one he does not) the further testimony of yourself, and perhaps of the Catholic Church, to his principle on Bible-reading. You in a manner agree with him in the principle, and only combat his application. You do not say to him, "I deny your right altogether to read the Bible;" but you try only to vindicate your Church from what he considers a dreadful imputation (and you *seem* to agree in it)

w), viz., the prohibition of the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. And if he does not believe your assertion, he goes away much more convinced, that Catholics cannot face this charge, and that they are conscious of doing wrong, in not permitting the promiscuous perusal of the Scriptures.

Now we must be prepared to take a much higher ground than this. The doctrine and practice of the Church must not be allowed to be impugned by those who have no claim at all to Scripture, and who can prove neither canon, its inspiration, nor its primary doctrines, except through that very authority which they are questioning, and through treacherous inconsistency with the principles on which they are interrogating it. When many years ago this ground was boldly adopted, it was charged with being an attempt to throw Protestants into infidelity, and sap the foundations of the Bible. Years of experience, and observation not superficial, have only strengthened our conviction, that this course must be fearlessly pursued. We must deny to Protestantism any right to use the Bible, much more to interpret it. Cruel and unfeeling it may be pronounced by those who understand the strength of our position, and the cogency of the argument; but it is much more charitable than to leave them to the repeated sin of blaspheming God's Spouse, and trying to undermine the faith of our poor Catholics.

The cry of "The Bible! the Bible! nothing but the Bible!" is as perilous to man's salvation, as the Jews' senseless cry "The Temple of the Lord! the Temple of the Lord! the Temple of the Lord it is!"* They had the Temple indeed, and the Shechinah, and the Altar, and the Ephod; and of the mere possession they made a boast, and a ground of confidence. And this confidence led to a neglect of the very duties which the temple had been built to secure, faith, and prayer, and sacrifice, and outward worship. How did the Almighty meet this perversion of His institutions? by threatening, or rather foretelling, the destruction of its cause. The temple would be taken from Israel, that it might learn to trust in God, and not in His material dwelling. The Temple had become an idol, and this illusion must be destroyed. Painfully again we must repeat, the Bible-idol is become, in the mouths of many Protestants, as vain, as formal, and as superstitious, as the Temple-cry of the Jews. The intelligible reading of it, nay, the very possession of it, is deemed a badge of religion, security of salvation. And how shall this perversion of God's intentions be removed? By the same process—a process which Protestantism is itself every day hastening, in a fearful way, leaving no alternative but despair. For, on one side, the learned Protestantism of the Continent, hastening down a rapid flight of consistent steps, towards a dark abyss of infidelity, is carrying the Bible down to that chaos of confusion and disorder, which is but a deeper echo of jarring and discordant sounds heard above, in schools, universities, churches, and meeting-houses of the heterodox. Myths and accommodations; allegories and parables; inversions of admitted chronologies, and transfers of histories, to poetry; philological illustrations, and critical emendations: these explain, transmute, and sink the Bible down to the level of an ordinary book, an uninspired old record. And, on the other

* Jer. vii. 4.

hand, the handling of the same sacred volume, by the unlearned and stable, is, through another process, destroying its vitality. If the agency is hurrying the Bible (as far as Protestants are concerned) fast to the dark cavern of night and death, the other is no less sinking it into very mire of human caprice, passion, and absurdity. The holy, the lime, the awful Word of God, over which Saints have meditated in e for years of incisable sweetness, yet of solemn reverence; round w scholars, pale with watching, have wreathed the flowers they have w or culled, in variegated commentaries; which the silver voice of virgin the deep tones of holy monks have chaunted in breathless midnight, t no earthly sound might disturb the depth of their meditation: this cor lation of the one Spirit of God, from the providence of centuries, thro which He alone has lived; this treasure of spiritual honey, drawn fro thousand flowers of various delicacy of perfume and flavour, not mix but each preserved; this gem of matchless price, reflecting in an infi number of faces, the ever varying yet constant image of God, in night, in His sweetness, in His anger, in His love, in His unity, in Trinity, in His heavens, on His earth, on Sinai and on Calvary; t noblest, greatest, divinest of things unsacramental, is put, indiscriminat unceremoniously, into the hands of every one. It is the schoolboy's ta book, it is the jailor's present, it is the drunkard's pawned pledge, it is dotard's text-book, it is the irreverent jester's butt, it is the fanat justification for every vice, blasphemy, and profaneness which he comm. For into every one's hand it must needs be thrust, from the Chinese to t Ojibbawa, from the Laplander to the Bosjman; from the child to the dota from the stuttering peasant to the glib, self-righteous old dame.

Now, when it is put into these hands, clean or unclean, there is no e dence given with it that it is what it is called—the Word of God.] preliminary study, no previous demonstration of genuineness, authentic or inspiration, no prefatory information about the writers, their tim their country, their objects. Some one tells them, “Here, take this boo and read it diligently, and learn from it what you have to believe, and wh to practise. For it is the Word of God.” The person giving it may be clergyman, or the agent of a Bible society, or a benevolent lady. Possib on their word it is so taken; but the receiver has no better authority f his belief than another being fallible as himself. There is no principle his mind, or in his faith, which makes that individual a link in a chai that goes on, by removes easily counted, to what he knows to be an inf lible authority. The giver's word, even if he be a clergyman, is no evidenc conveys no certainty. How slight must be the belief in inspiration, ho vague, how unconvincing, which is thus communicated! But, while t minds rude, uninstructed, unfurnished with necessary knowledge to unde stand a common book, the most sacred and difficult of all is thus lightl entrusted, it is on terms such as common sense would forbid in the cas of any other volume. Full power is given them, and each of them, ove it. It is delivered up, without limitation, to their tender mercies, to b interpreted by each one as he pleases, to have any sense, however absur put upon it. Who would conceive it possible that any code of laws, mora or social, could with safety be thus treated? Who would not feel that i would be exposing legislative enactments, of but secondary importance

be degraded, and brought into contempt, and entangled in endless confusion, were a similar policy to be adopted in their regard?

But of course we are told that the difference between the two is immense: that the one is the word of man, the other the Word of God. Agreed: but if God has made use of human language He has submitted it to the action of the ears, the judgment, the sense, and feelings, which are exercised on that means of communication. Indeed, it is not too much to say that God, who could have given us a Bible as easy to read as a child's primer, has in words of two syllables, has on the contrary chosen to give us a work, more difficult to understand than any other perhaps in existence. No Greek classic, no Arabic, or Persian poet, no Hindoo mystic is more abstruse. It is mere cant and rhapsody to assert the contrary. What can a peasant, who is told to read through his Bible, make out of the family and national genealogies of Genesis, or Esdras; of the architectural details of Exodus, Kings, and Ezekiel; of the minute regulations for sacrifices and uncleannesses, diseases, and expiations in Leviticus; of the wars, the exterminations, the merciless dealings of Josue, Samuel, and Kings? What meaning will he draw from the poetry of the prophets; from the woes of Isaiah against the Moabites, Ethiopians, Babylonians, and Syrians; from the obscure parabolic visions of Ezechiel; from the locusts of Joel, the unclean marriages of Osce, the murmurings of Jonas, the dark adumbrations of Habaccuc? And the Psalms, and Job, and Ecclesiastes, so deep, so obscure, so full of danger to a single false step in misapplication, who can conceive what nonsense, or even blasphemy, an untutored mind may elaborate from them, reading them, and certainly not understanding them, with the proud assurance, that it is just as privileged as the most learned doctor, to comprehend, and to explain, and to apply whatever they contain? And, last of all, take "the Canticle of Canticles." What delicacy of mind and feeling, what a knowledge of the existence, and principles of a mystical application, what a power of abstracting from apparent sensuality of thought and phrase, and dwelling only on its chastest antagonism—love divine—does not this most mysterious, most perplexing, and most bewildering gift of divine inspiration demand, for its profitable, or even its safe perusal?

We hesitate not to repeat, that merely as a book to be understood, the Bible presents more difficulties, independent of phraseology or style, than any other work. But considered as a practical book, from which each of its readers has to distil his own code of morals, and his own articles of faith, it becomes a thousand times more difficult, not to say dangerous. Can any one believe that no peril will arise to an untutored mind, from reading the accounts of what now would be crimes, unreplicated, when there recorded; none from the conduct of men described as pleasing to God, which yet even the civil laws would not tolerate with impunity; none from the plain-spoken descriptions of occurrences, over which the usages of society would now cast a veil; none from the familiar use of imagery and illustration, which the most devoted Biblical would shrink from employing in his pulpit? And as to faith, we should be almost ready to retract every word that we have written, if a well-attested case could be proved to us, of any one, left to learn religion from the Bible, having thence deduced the doctrine of the Trinity, or of one only God in three real persons; or that of the Divinity of our Lord, in its true sense, as consubstantial to the Father,

as being one in person, and having two perfect natures. These are the dogmas which the Church has considered essential to salvation, and fundamental of all revealed religion ; yet we feel confident, that no single person has ever discovered these for himself in the Bible, and that they are only believed by Bible-Christians (where they *are* believed) in consequence of self-deceit, or self-imposition, in fancying that they hold on Scripture evidence, what in reality they only maintain, because they have been so taught in church, that is, on the evidence of their clergyman.

We may be told that we are arguing upon an over-strained hypothesis, and that the Bible-alone theory, on the contrary, does not exclude guidance in the use of Scripture. See how many commentaries, and expositions of the Bible, Protestants have written ; see how diligently all Reformed clergymen expound it to their flocks.

As to the first point, let us observe, that the fact is in direct contradiction with the principle. For a hundred thousand copies of the Bible, without note or comment, (this being the special boast of the system,) that are annually distributed, how many copies of Scott's, or Clarke's, or Kitto's commentaries are *sold* ? Why, not one to the hundred. The Bible is given away to the poor and rude, the commentary is bought by the rich and educated. "the worst inn's worst room," in the ship's fore-castle, in the shepherd's cottage, the well-known binding of the Society's Bible is to be seen ; but who would think of looking for a commentary there ? We come therefore to this conclusion, that Protestantism considers the Scripture to be an easy book for the illiterate, but fraught with difficulties for the learned, fit to be read in its naked plainness by the unwise, but requiring the addition of copious illustration for the educated. Or else we must conclude, that a bare annotation and explanation is an affront to that, which God made so simple that it is intelligible and luminous to the ignorant and uncultivated.

Then as to the light which is drawn from clerical exposition of Scripture where is it to be found ? We have certainly learnt but little dogmatic truth from such Anglican sermons as we have read ; still less have we found there anything approaching to a body of doctrine drawn from the Bible. But this is not our present point. The Bible is given to all, as a guide and rule. Now one goes on Sunday to hear a High-Church preacher, and another to sit under an Evangelical minister ; this goes to a Baptist conventicle, and that to a Unitarian meeting-house. In Scotland one goes to the parish kirk and another to a free kirk. It is perfectly certain, that each will return home, with a perfectly different set of doctrines, drawn from the same Bible, and no one in his senses, we apprehend, will imagine, that the hearer of the Puseyite, meeting his neighbour of the Socinians, after service, will find that they have both been listening to scriptural sermons, inculcating the same views : for example, that the Puseyite shall find that the Unitarian preacher has been proving from Scripture the authority of the Church, of sacramental action in it, or the latter learn that his friend has been listening to a scriptural discourse against the Divinity of our Lord. But instead of this, it will be found that all who hear one clergyman agree generally together, by agreeing with him. And who will say that this is the result of independent Bible reading, or Protestant private judgment upon it ? It comes therefore to this ; either this sacred book is, in reality, not left to the reader's own perusal, but requires guidance, which may make it the vehicle

the most contradictory doctrines ; or else that guidance is a pernicious arture from the first principle of Protestantism, ought to be withdrawn, a still greater variety of individual convictions should be hailed as the timate result of liberty.

n any way we may deduce, that Scripture thus given up to the interpretation of the multitude, even though it be assisted by the labours of teachers, re learned, but as fallible as themselves, and contradicting each other, omes pliable, and subservient to any imaginable theory of faith or morals ; use the irreverent, but expressive comparison of an old writer, it is as "a e of wax" that may be twisted, moulded, kneaded, and tortured into any pe ; or, to adopt the sterner and consecrated phrase of an inspired ostle, it is "wrested," that is, forcibly, violently, recklessly, and perversely tortured, "by the unlearned and unstable," by the ignorant who have no ed and unerring code of faith, but are driven to and fro by every wind of ctrine, to the teaching of errors which lead "to their own destruction." * What must be the natural tendency of this use of Scripture ? Certainly bring it more and more into contempt. Without any solid ground for lief in its inspiration, it is impossible that the faith in this, its only aim to deference, can long continue. It must wear out more and more, each generation. Without any sure guide in its interpretation varieties in opinion will every day increase. Without any idea of a dogmatical system sense of definite doctrine, as taught there, must diminish. Let it not said : "But the experiment has gone on for three hundred years, and et it has not come absolutely to this." We might reply, that it has gone pretty far already ; and that we are beginning now to see the harvest of ast seed. But we must rather deny the assertion. It is true that the abstract principle of the "Bible alone," as expressed boldly by the apostate hillingworth, has been an axiom of Protestantism ; but it is only within ur own generation that its practical working has been tried. Two means ere previously wanting. The great bulk of the working classes could not ead, and there were no Bible-readers, to supply that deficiency. And the Bible was not brought within the reach of the population by gratuitous istribution, till societies for that purpose had sprung up. It is, therefore, nly now, that the experiment is being tried on a great scale, of what the indiscriminate reading of the Bible will make a people. It has been tried n the dominions of Queen Pomare, with unexampled success. It has, nder the judicious management of evangelical missionaries, transformed a mild and promising race, into a pack of lazy, immoral infidels. The very latest accounts (we wish we had room for some extracts,) confirm all that ve foresaw years ago. With us the process may be slower. There is yet n England a strong underground of old tradition, which, thank God, he Reformation could not dig up, and which deceives men into an inconsistent conviction (the *bienheureuses inconsequences de l'esprit de l'homme*," as Guizot calls them,)+ of doctrines, which they fancy they have learnt of themselves. There is a civilisation, and there are institutions interwoven with old truths, which thus receive from them an artificial life, and will lourish and be green, in consequence, after their own roots are withered. There is a deference, too, beyond what exists in other countries, from the

* 2 Peter, iii. 16.

† Preface to his "Etudes Morales," 1851.

outward honour of rank and wealth, to their opinions and even doctrines. And moreover there is a conformity of moral feeling, a congeniality of thought, with the principles of the Bible, the result of Christianity, which we are mistaken for evidences of its claims, by proving it to be in harm with man's soul.

But let us not forget, on the other hand, the agencies at work for the destruction of these preservative and conservative influences. Into rural districts they may be slow in penetrating. The danger there is more of moral degeneracy, of a brutalising decline of virtuous feeling. The poisonings, the infanticides, the disregard of connubial ties, in fact, the total contempt of matrimony, and the increase of illegitimacy, show in which direction is the course of English country morality, and may give a test of how Bible reading has power to counteract it. But in the intelligent population of towns and cities, it is with powers directly hostile to Scripture that religion has to contend; and Protestantism is, we hold, unable to cope with them. We have seen Biblical summaries which circulate among the people calculated to startle them, and shake their faith. As for example, the text will be: "Moses was a man exceeding meek above all that dwelt upon earth:"* then will follow all the destructions of men committed under the Jewish government, while Israel was in the desert. Or it may be, "David was a man according to God's own heart,"† followed by the enumeration of actions which are at variance with our moral feelings and ideas. Nor is this all. Debates and discussions on such subjects are publicly held; and we have seen, in one of the periodicals that detail them, (the "Reasoner,") an account of a numerous meeting, to hear a champion of the inspiration of the Bible to give his proofs. These were divided into some twenty heads: but it seems he broke down in the first, and never made his appearance again. Every week this publication, which openly denies Scripture, gives a long list of the anti-Christian lectures, to be given, in a number of halls devoted to that object. In other words, the popular arts, and popular arms, which Protestantism has for years been using against the Church, infidelity is now employing against Christianity; the short page of biting questions, the shower of blasphemous ridicule, the tract full of exploded calumnies, the pamphlet-pot-pourri of all combined; those fictitious discussions, in which all is predetermined one way, oratory that "tickles the ears," the "sounding brass" of bellowing declaimers, and the "tinkling cymbals" of lady-lecturers, (if they who lack charity must be as one of these,)—a verification, in fact, of what Catholics have long said, that every stone thrown by the Protestants against the Church of Christ, is sure to be picked up, and cast at the glass house from which it was foolishly sped.

To these dangers and to many more, which we must pass over, is the Bible to be exposed in the coming generation. And the dangers will increase, for in the hands of sciolists every new discovery furnishes an objection. As yet geology, human races, Egyptian and Indian antiquities, have novelties for the frequenters of such meetings as we have described; but electricity and mesmerism are every day furnishing new implements for the attempt to uproot two of the strongest foundations on which Anglicans build, not Christianity only, but the inspiration of Scripture—miracles and prophecy. But on the

* Num. xii. 3.

† 1 Reg. xlii. 14. 3 Reg. xv. 3.

hand, the antidotes which heresy can furnish cannot increase. There chance of any new discovery which will supply direct evidence of infidelity. This is what Protestantism totally wants. Corroborative, or direct proof comes well upon the positive demonstration; but where wanting, as it is and has been, out of the Church, since the days of the Reformation to this hour, every other argument must fail. Nor let it be overlooked, that these perils to belief in the Bible arise from the principle now strikingly thrown in our faces, by the questions with which we opened our disquisition; from the promiscuous and universal reading recommended by modern Protestantism. You put this abstruse and complicated volume into the hands of everybody, and you court free inquiry into it, and the exercise of uncontrolled judgment to be exercised on it. At the same time, as we have before observed, you furnish them with no evidence of what you assert, that this is a book divinely inspired. You leave it to them to obtain, or reject, as best they can, the proofs. Is it wonderful that they should not, however, what their masters cannot give them? On the contrary, is not free inquiry sure to lead many half-learned, or keen-witted, or over-zealous spirits, to the rejection of the claims, for which they have been taught to believe? We thus trace directly to the principle of the Bible-cry, the very retribution for the ill-used blessing, which God threatened his people for their abuse of the Temple, and their turning it into what we have called the Temple-cry, the destruction, for them, of the misunderstood gift.

There are two ways, then, in which we foresee this result, in truth the seed of infidelity, less intellectual, and more sensual than German rationalism, arising from the unlimited, and unguided use of the Scriptures. The first consists in the want of evidence that accompanies them, beyond the power of man; an evidence which by degrees is found to be insufficient, and leads to doubt and then to disbelief. The second consists of the innumerable varieties of opinions, many of them absurd, many wicked, into which a mass of unlettered and untutored men, judging for themselves, must fall; the idea of dogma being gradually extinguished, all definite belief in the many mysteries being lost, till Christianity becomes a name; unless a happier solution come—a swallowing up of this spiritual death in victory, the substitution of Catholic certainty for Protestant insecurity. We shall not more nearly approach another topic, which we have cursorily touched, the effect which the unlearned use of Scriptures may have, in suggesting colourable excuses for consent to the frailties of our nature. We have seen this result to be by no means uncommon in individual cases; but we know not to what extent it may become a public scandal. It is strange, that while the English, perhaps we may say the Germanic character is usually phlegmatic, passive, and unimpressionable, in all ordinary matters, there is none more easily wrought up to fanaticism in religion. Not to speak of the Anabaptists in Germany, and the Puritans in Great Britain, as going to an earlier period, we have seen how any wild enthusiast can attract a crowd of followers, who are easily induced to see his pretensions warranted, or foreshown by the Bible. Johanna Southcote, Ward,*

This man got somehow into gaol; and we know not how he ended. But the text by which he proved himself to be foretold in Scripture, and by which he induced many silly persons to follow him, was Luke ii. 14 (as in the Anglican version) "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to his men."

Courtenay, Irving, in their day, led many after them ; and Joe Smit the Mormons are not unlikely yet to fill a remarkable chapter in the history of Biblical illusions. The same book was put forward by all, as sealing mission ; and if any of our readers are occasionally favoured by a printed or manuscript, purporting to have been sent to all peers, bishops and commoners of the realm, they will be aware that there exists in the neighbourhood of London, a lady and child, in whom is believed to be embodied the fulfilment of all the prophets, and the complement of New Testament revelation. For every text of Scripture is supposed to have reference to them, and to some reverend person, who either ministers to the gossamer, or is its amiable victim ! Nor is this a solitary instance. We have within these few months, received from their authors several works containing the most crack-brained systems of religion, extracted from the Bible. But what shall we say to that flaming and disgusting specimen of Protestant biblical fanaticism, that compound of blasphemy, infamy, craziness and hypocrisy—the Agapemone ? For this is a tolerated result of free deductions from Scripture reading, and interpretation.

There is another cry immediately raised, when Catholics attack Protestant Biblical fallacies. It is “ See how Popery is in league with infidelity, allies itself with it, in undermining the Bible.” In reality, we have avoided the course, which might give rise to this foolish charge. We have been showing that the catastrophe, which is groundlessly attributed to us in thought, is more likely to be brought about in reality, by the incongruous rate “ liberty of prophesying,” which, partly in dislike of us, our adversaries are promoting. Yet, we are not inclined to shrink from our position in consequence of this accusation. We deem it necessary, because charitable and just, for Catholics to make a stand on their high principle in this matter to what conclusion it may lead others. “ Protestants have no objection to the Bible ; they have no means of proving its inspiration, except by denying the very theory of which, against us, they make their boast.” More prominently this can be put forth, the shorter will be the strife. Rather let us say, the shorter the road to truth.

Dr. Dixon has treated this question well ; and one point in particular has put in what strikes us as a novel and convincing view ; which might be pressed even further than it is by him. Dr. Bloomfield, of London, in a charge delivered in St. Paul's, Nov. 2, 1850, thus expressed himself : “ To deny the inspiration of Scripture is one step towards the rejection of the Gospel as a revelation from God. Against this *fatal heresy* I would earnestly caution my younger brethren, as being one from which, in the present state of the human mind, we have more to fear than from the encroachments of Popery.”

Now before quoting Dr. Dixon's judicious commentary on this passage we may remark, that the dignity who delivered it, clearly intimates that it is confirmatory of all that we have written. For he acknowledges that belief of inspiration is an encroaching, or increasing error ; nay, he intimates that it is so spreading as to threaten his younger brethren. Cautioning them, in particular, proves that it is an evil of the coming generation, a cancer that is likely to spread in the clergy of the establishment themselves. For why would not older pastors be as much called, to repel evil, if it threatened the flock ? But as “ the encroachments of Popery

red to be dangerous to the younger clergy, so are they cautioned, on the other hand, against this no less fatal heresy. Let any Catholic, of whatever country, be asked, if he should think it possible that a Bishop of the Church, addressing his clergy, should have cautioned them—priests—against denying the inspiration of Holy Scripture? Unhesitatingly he would reply, that the very idea is ridiculous; that it supposes a simple impossibility. Yet here we have one corresponding, in position in the Church Establishment, to one of our Bishops, feeling it a duty to warn his brethren against falling into this fatal heresy. Does not this more prove all that we have said, especially when we add his reference to the present state of the human mind,” as a further evidence, of the general tendency of the age?

Now let us hear the learned professor's pithy comment, “We are here told truly, that to deny inspiration is to embrace a *fatal heresy*. On the other hand, the Church of England, in her Sixth Article, declares that Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatever is read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or to be thought necessary or necessary to salvation.” We shall see just now, how, by adhering to the doctrine of *this article*, any one can be convicted of *fatal heresy* for denying the inspiration of Scripture.” (Vol. i. p. 11.) Dr. Dixon then proceeds to establish most satisfactorily, that Protestants cannot possibly do so, on consistent grounds, this inspiration.

The inconsistency of Dr. Bloomfield's reasoning thus appears. He calls it a fatal heresy to deny the inspiration of the Bible. A fatal heresy can be the denial of an article of faith, necessary to salvation. But according to the Articles nothing can be of faith which cannot be proved by Scripture: it follows, therefore, that the inspiration of Scripture is proved by Scripture. Hence we have this process of logical demonstration established. You are bound under pain of heresy to believe in the inspiration of the Bible. But as no heresy can exist unless the doctrine which it contradicts, be read in the Bible, it follows that you are obliged to believe in the inspiration of the Bible, because that inspiration is there declared. But if in what is there taught, as an essential truth, to deny which is heresy, supposes the recognition of the Bible as an inspired book; and therefore you are thrown back and forward from one horn to the other; you believe in the Bible because it is inspired, and you believe it is inspired because you find it in the Bible.

The truth is comprised in a few words: “No infallible Church, no Bible.” No less, on no other authority could such a tremendous fact be received: no weaker foundation will uphold it. We mentioned above some zealous Protestants, undertaking to prove, to an infidel assembly, the inspiration of Scripture, by some twenty arguments. The attempt unwittingly reminds us of the cunning animal in the fable, that had a hundred ways of eluding the pursuit of his enemies. The hounds gave chase, and in his first doubling he was caught. We pretend to no more than his more modest companion to have one only means of salvation. When pursued, we climb, at once, up the side of the Church,” and we look tranquilly down upon our foiled enemies, in amidst the thick foliage of venerable antiquity; upon every leaf of which we read inscribed, those golden words of St. Augustine, now

become axiomatic in the schools, "Ego autem Evangelio non credem, nisi me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas." "I not believe in the Gospel, unless the authority of the Catholic Church moved me thereto."

If therefore we be asked, why we do not give the Bible indifference all; and the shutting up (as it is called) of God's word, be disdained and thrown in our face, we will not seek to elude the question, or meet the objection by denial, or by attempts to prove that our principles on this subject are antagonistic, to those of Protestants. They are antagonistic, and we are avowing it.

1. We answer, therefore, boldly, that we give not the Word of God indiscriminately to all, because God Himself has not so given it. He has made reading an essential part of man's constitution, nor a congenial faculty, nor a term of salvation, nor a condition of Christianity. But being that He has made such, and then has told us that "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing from the Word of God."* He has not made "pen and ink"† the badges of His Apostle's calling, but the keys of His kingdom. He did not give to the world the means of multiplying books by machinery, nor even materials in abundance on which to print them, till after the Church had flourished for fourteen hundred years, had bred thousands of martyrs, had educated hundreds of doctors and learned men, had trained myriads of holy religious to perfection, had sent millions of simple believers to the heavenly Jerusalem; had converted vast nations, had planted many glorious churches, had settled Christianity in unity over the whole world, and had fulfilled in herself whatever in prophecy was magnificent, whatever in types was majestic, whatever in promise was unfailing. We are to believe that no Providence watched over the Church, while she achieved all this, and was one, and fair, and holy before the world; that God's action only began when the time of discord came, and of contentions, and of divisions, and has been continued (it is blasphemy to think it) only to prolong and deepen the strife, and to prepare the way for an increase of selfishness, of hardness, of doubt, and of unbelief? He did not give to the Apostles a precept to write; He did not deliver a code to be written; He did not prescribe a single written formula, a liturgy, a prayer to be so recorded. He left it to the transient impulse of the moment, to the sway of circumstances, to the demands of friendship, to the claims of local character, to suggest the occasion, and the form, and the amount, and the very substance of what each would deliver to particular churches, or to families, or to individuals, of the immense, and still unexhausted stores that were stored up with them. And is this all compatible with the idea, of an essential requisite of His religion, nay, the only essential requisite, being the collection of the New Testament? He allowed the very flower and beauty of His Church to pass away, before a word was written; the one-hearted and one-souled Church of Jerusalem had drooped and withered; the chair of Antioch, where first Christianity found a name, had migrated to Rome, leaving only a glorious foot-print of the primacy impressed, in thankfulness on that privileged city; the Church's cradle had been sprinkled with blood, before the first reed was dipped in ink, under the Holy Spirit's overshadowing.

* Rom. x. 16, 17.

† 2 Jo. 12.

ing, to write the first words of the new inspiration. Holy men passed by; Stephen was stoned, James martyred; nay, Mary, the Mother of Redeemer, was taken up to heaven, without ever enjoying the prerogative of every Christian, this almost necessary condition of Christianity, the complete Word of God. Moreover, Apostles themselves had fled far away from the seat of religious splendour, were wandering in Asia, and Armenia, and India, and founding churches, unconscious of what their brethren had written, unable certainly to communicate their neophytes; yet their work stood firm on its basis, and cemented the great universal Church. The Eunuch had gone rejoicing from the city of Gaza, to Queen Candace, and had borne Christianity to the depths of the African desert; but Philip had no New Testament to give him as a safe gift, and as a safe record of what he had to teach. His only Gospel was Isaiah, and the short commentary on it, which Philip had given him in Caesarea. And so St. Irenæus tells us that many nations possessed Christianity, "without ink or paper." Are we then to believe that these, these apostles, these churches, were, in that privileged season of God's grace, deprived of what alone was to be the solace, the stay, the foundation, the bulwark, the load-star, the helm, the salvation of every Christian?

For our parts, we repudiate any theory, involving such revolting ideas, so much pride and boastfulness; so much pretension to superiority, where we may well be humbled and abashed, still more contradicting so palpably and so grossly the evident course of God's dispensation, nay, His manifested will.

We therefore believe His sacred word to be a gift of insuperable value, not only worth a thousand times over all that man has written else, but having no price except what God alone can fix, in that same season from which inspired them. But at the same time we believe that God has now up and completed His Church, both in eternal construction and in temporal perfection, before He allowed the first record of inspiration to be written; that he so formed it, solid in its frame-work, beautiful in its proportions, splendid in its appointments, so well and harmoniously knit together, as that it had an independent and enduring principle of life. If before God had permitted, that as it floated through the ocean of its persecutions, or dashed through the storms of its later contests with the world, any page, or even book of that sacred collection to be washed away; if the first persecutors, who hunted inexorably after the Scriptures, succeeded in destroying them, or in the darkness, or rather the distress, of a later period, portions had been lost, still the Church and the faith delivered to the saints would have remained integrant, complete, and sufficient. The documents withdrawn would have been duplicate copies, so holy and valuable indeed, of an unfailing record kept in the traditions of the Church; not a tittle or iota would have passed away from her lives, nor from her teaching. Or rather the same Holy Spirit who dictated the precious page would still continue to preserve its substance unimpaired; for independent of, and anterior to, all written word was the divine voice, that He should teach the Church *all* truth.

We further say, that we do not permit the indiscriminate and undisciplined use of the Bible, because God has not given to his Church the instruction to do so. As He did not furnish her with the means, nor with the command, so has he not instilled into her that spontaneous impulse that

guides her to new duties, in favour of this mode of propagating the Word. He founded her upon a principle of subordination, and gave her apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly doctors." The questions could times have been answered negatively till now: "Are all apostles? prophets? are all doctors?"* But surely this principle of her organisation would have been at an end much sooner, if she had taught, what she has taught, that every one has to be his own apostle, prophet, and doctor. Yes, this is the result of universal license not only to read, but to preach, of Scripture. Wherever it prevails, church government declines, in subordination of judgment springs up, and a spirit of self-sufficiency and takes the place of religious humility and docility. Then as God did give the Church the instinct of conversion, and implanted in her the conscience of power to fulfil His command to teach all nations, and intuitive knowledge of successful means to do so, He certainly did not communicate her the discovery of this age, that even to others every one is a doctor, may become an apostle; and this is the result of universal Bible-reading. When a country had to be converted, like Ireland, or England, or Germany, bishops and priests were sent, ready at once to add a new member to the body of Christ, by the formation of an infant, but a fully-organised, Church. There were not shipped off colonies of artisans, with wives and children all pensioned for the work, under the title of missionaries, to convert the heathen—men uneducated, unspiritual, unqualified for the work. And now, not, as well as now? Because now such men are deemed fully qualified, they have only a sufficient supply of Bibles to distribute, in some ludicrous translation, and have themselves learnt sufficient of Bible phrases to perfect them in cant. And at home likewise, we now see the episcopal office usurped by committees of gentlemen and ladies, who, neglecting consideration of there being a paid and established clergy, take upon themselves the duty of providing Bible-readers instead.† Are we therefore, still hold to the old ways, to depart from them, and from the very institution of our religion, in favour of a system which disorganises the very constitution of the Church, subverts all established order, and creates new offices,

* 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29.

† Take the following prospectus just published. Not a single clergyman is on the committee, or holds any office in the society. Indeed, by the prospectus, it is clear that missionaries and Bible-readers, not the clergy, are the instruments of salvation that its authorities to. They speak of the people as not yet having had the Gospel sent to them.

"Immediate arrangement of the London City Mission to send the Gospel to every family of the poor and working classes in Marylebone, Paddington and St. George's.

"Every District in the above Parishes, not previously under visitation of City Mission or Scripture Readers is about to be immediately supplied with a Missionary.

"FIFTY-TWO MISSIONARIES will then be employed to visit One Hundred Thousand families for the purpose of reading to them the Holy Scriptures, explaining the way of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, and urging on all to attend some place of worship where the Gospel is preached; also to gather neglected Children into various Day and Sabbath Schools, to catechise freely the Bible, and in all other practicable ways to promote the spiritual interests of those who habitually neglect the public means of grace.

"FOUR THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED POUNDS per annum will be required to meet the necessary expenditure. Subscriptions to the above objects have been already obtained amounting to about £2700 per annum, to make up the deficiency; the additional sum of £1700 per annum is therefore needed.

"UPWARDS OF TWENTY THOUSAND POUNDS per annum is also required to supply the remaining destitute districts of the Metropolis with Missionaries. The Committee of Auxiliary for the above Parishes earnestly appeal to their friends, and to those who have not previously contributed to help them, by their subscriptions and prayers, to sustain this great work, and to extend it throughout the whole of this vast city."

utes fresh commissions, of which she, in her best days, was uncon-
? God, too, has fixed in the very heart of His Church the instinct
y; nay, has made it a very law of her existence, a mark of her truth,
lence of her divine origin. And therefore within her, and throughout
his unity has permanently existed. It has been maintained at the
? any sacrifice, and only by adherence to principle, as severe as that
prompts a man to part with a limb, to save his life. Unity is the
the Church. Subordination, and docility, are the means whereby it
en jealously preserved. And is she likely, after eighteen centuries of
uance in possession of this gift, to cast it at once away, by introducing
would cause disorganisation and disruption into her constitution?
ees that, wherever the Protestant principle has been adopted, unity
ased to exist. A gradual dissolution of every cohesive element, a
off from every centre of unity, a splitting, a breaking, a comminu-
nto smaller and smaller fragments, is the visible and logical con-
nce of this "reformed" system. Dissent from the powerful national
ishment of large bodies, subdivisions of these, each day, into further
further separations of even these into lesser communities, till the
ous discord has divided families; such are the clear effects of indiscri-
te reading of the Bible. If, then, we still prize unity, should we not
ad, putting all questions of principle and duty to a revealed system
aw aside, to reject what has been its safeguard till now, and try what
een its destruction? For, be it remembered, the Catholic Church
experimentalist.

In fact, in answer to the question proposed, we answer, that we cannot,
must not adopt the Protestant course, because we have no reason to
re its fruits, or its expectations. We see no motive to be satisfied with
eckless experiment which others are trying. We do not see morals
oving, or crime diminishing; but rather the contrary. We see dogma
dogma disappearing; baptismal regeneration is gone; the Eucharist
reely believed in; even the Divinity of our Lord is faintly held to,
that generally obscured by Nestorianism, or some other ancient heresy.
ne can dream, that faith in these great truths will revive, through the
sion of Bible-reading. The High Churchmen, who still flatter them-
s that the Establishment has symptoms of new life in it, do not see it
e wider spread of this practice, but in what may be called its antago-
c, because the Catholic principle, in the principle of authority, which
fancy' is being strengthened and diffused.

mediately we hear the words: "Ha! you own you are afraid of the
e—you dare not trust your people with it. You acknowledge that if
read it, they would abandon the unity of the Church, and seek relief
he liberty of the Gospel." To this we reply, that we fear anything
ch we see in others baneful. The time is perhaps approaching, when a
l disease will break out again amongst us; and physicians will forbid
he use of delicious, and generally wholesome, food. And only because
erience has shown them, those who have partaken of it, lying dead
und them. In early times there was no need of legislation on the
ect. The indiscriminate reading of Scripture was an impossibility, few
ld read; manuscripts were rare and expensive; and even St. Augustine,
n his conversion, knew not where to purchase or procure, a copy, at

Milan. How un-Protestant must the City of Ambrose have been faithful heard the Divine word read in the Church; and then list those splendid, or quaint, but always orthodox, devout, and practical lies, which bishops or priests delivered on it. Every one that he Augustine, a Chrysostome, or an Ambrose, did not merely think was sitting under a learned man, or an eloquent, or a holy, but that one of the flock listening to his shepherd, a scholar attending on his, a layman learning from a priest. He believed and knew that receiving the instructions of one in communion with the Church of an authorised expositor of her doctrine, her mouthpiece, only delivered what the Holy Spirit had taught her, only drawing from the deep orthodox doctrine, and of sound words, committed, by tradition, keeping. If at home, he read the Bible besides, he did so under the protection, and under the guidance and safeguard which it secured him, never dreamt of judging for himself. When one did so, struck doctrine at variance with the teaching delivered, and persuaded to follow his view, rather than his pastor's, that man was at once a heretic. His heresy might be crushed in the bud, or it might grow to be a weed, spreading into other countries. It was thus that Novatus, Helvidius, and Vigilantius and many others arrived at this fatal conclusion by choosing to interpret half a dozen texts of Scripture their own way.

Now such characters were the exceptions; they rose, half a dozen a century. Judge then, what would have been the Church's discipline, had witnessed instead, what Protestantism considers now to be the rule, that every man reading Scripture should become a heretic, that is, should make, and hold, and proclaim, his own private views of it, independent or rather in opposition to, the Church's interpretation and doctrine. The reading of God's word should make a man separate from her communion, consequently become a schismatic. Thus continued the Church through centuries; and as the deepening darkness of the ages into which she descended overclouded literature, still more difficult became self-interpretation; for lessened were the means of indulging in it, in a generation of mail-clad warriors, and doubled was the faithful reliance of children on their mother.

Then came the great trial of principles, with the bold spirit, that revived civilisation infused into the world. It was like the sudden return of health upon broken and languishing youth. With it flows back the tide of passions that far had ebbed, and the flood of appetites that long slept. With the learning of the Pagans came back their haughty spirit, which prepared to reconquer the dominion, that, ages before, Christianity had subdued. Sensualism incarnated in Luther, fatalism embodied in Calvin, the luxury and the philosophy of ancient Rome, its Epicureanism and its Stoicism, came to battle with the Church. It was the war of reality through the contest of faith. We need not disgust our readers, by the acknowledgments of the so-called Reformers, that every vice had fully increased, since they had thrown off the Church's yoke. The passions are accessible in Milner, or Treverne.* Luther, by teaching openly the

* Or see them recently collected in a new and excellent work, by M. Auguste Niel of which we hope soon to give our readers an account, entitled "*Du Protestantisme, toutes les Hérésies dans leur rapports avec le Socialisme.*"—Paris, 1852, pp. 543, seqq.

may sin as he likes if he only have faith—Calvin, by proclaiming that determined fatalism imperiously domineers over his actions, opened his door to vice, and crime, unchecked and unbounded. But both in one means of gaining partisans, and destroying the Church. It was of setting up the private judgment, that is the pride of each one, that what had held undisputed sway over the minds of all. “Not the Church but the Bible,” they cried; “not the priest but reason.” Nor was it difficult to foresee, that they who yielded to the call, for the purpose of getting off the yoke, would find in the Bible what their masters showed that continency was impossible, virginity no virtue, and breach of the law no sin. Then too, away were to go confession, and fasting, and mortification, and monachism, and celibacy; and penances, and restitution, and indissolubility of marriages, and evangelical counsels, and priestly adulation, and ecclesiastical censures, and whatever checked immorality, and promoted virtue, the golden net-work of religious observance spread over the frail, treasure-fraught vessel, to secure it from breaking. Who read the Bible was to get rid of all these restraints, and holy ordinances, and was to live by a rule of his own making, in the liberty which passions could wring from conscience.

And how were all men to come into the enjoyment of these exemptions? The Bible was to be translated into every language, not as heretofore had been done, in almost every country, under the sanction and correction of the Church, but by any one who chose to undertake it.

Such was the state of Christianity, when the Church was called on, to stand up against the new errors of Germany. She did exactly what the ancient, and primitive, Church would have done, struck at the root of the error encountered at once its principle. This was, had the individual the right not merely to read, but to interpret Scripture, according to his own private judgment, and follow this, in preference to the Church’s teaching? To this she boldly and decidedly answered, “No.”* But the evil was not remedied; how was it to be remedied? By separating the two,—the reading from the interpreting. Allow the first, where there is no danger of the second.

For this division three things are necessary: first an accurate version; secondly, such annotations as keep before the reader the Church’s teaching, and the passages which the new teaching had perverted, and which might most easily be misunderstood; and thirdly, such good sense, knowledge, and piety, as would give security that the reader did not belong to the class of “the unlearned and unstable,” and would not prefer his own fancies to the authorised interpretations of the Church. To all who came within these conditions, the reading of the Bible in the vulgar tongue was, and is, and always has been, permitted. The pastors of the Church could alone be the judges of their existence.† If they had permitted more, would have been to give in to the very principle that had been set at work, to destroy Church authority. It may perhaps be out of place to remark, that in countries, like this, in which the antagonism of Catholics with Protestants keeps alive, and before their

* Conc. Trid. Sess: iv. Decret. de Editione et Usu Sacrorum Librorum.

† Regulæ de Lib. Prohib. iv.

minds constantly, the two opposing principles of Church authority, a judgment, restriction is less necessary, and scarcely exists. And other hand, in Catholic countries, such as can read, or do read, have to the Latin version, without restraint.

But though the Scriptures may be here permitted, we do not *urge* on our people; we do not encourage them to read them; we do not urge them to the utmost among them. Certainly not; and with a few remarks upon this point, we will close our lengthy article.

We may observe, that whatever is God's work is made at once complete. He "rests from it" when he has accomplished it. Modifications and alterations may appear in its secondary parts, but as to organisation, all is perfect. He was pleased to occupy time with the creation of the heaven and the earth; but once finished, he returned to it no more. The laws which rule them now, ruled them from the beginning. The deluge defaced, and remodelled the surface of earth; altered relative proportions and positions, but it is the same terraqueous globe that it was, ocean and land, mountain and plain, as God made it at the first. And no cultivation or discovery man can alter its laws of production, its seasons, its relations to animal and vegetable life. In like manner he fashioned man, and breathed into him a living soul; and for the purposes of his creation He made him perfect. The development of intellectual powers, no inventions of his ingenuity, through thousands of years, has added a single organ to his body, or a single power to his mind. The beauty, the strength, the resources of both have been brought out; but in their essence and principle they existed from the beginning. The savage in the woods is man, as completely organised for life as the most refined child of civilisation. And food, and air, and other requisites for life were adequately, from the first moment of life, provided and stowed. It would be wrong, it would be a sin against society and against Providence, to reject the additional benefits which have accumulated around us—nourishment, clothing, shelter, medicine, instruments, skill, learned accomplishments, recreations, unknown to early races; but these lived, and enjoyed life without them, in sufficient measure, because they possessed that which was essential to it. The power that made them could not withhold it.

What God does in the physical world is a counterpart of His work in the spiritual order. He created the former that man might live. He has perfected the latter that he may live for ever. In each the organisation necessary for its life must be complete. When God bestows a system of the spiritual, and eternal life, it is by a revelation. The first of these completely developed was that of the Old Law. Let us briefly examine it.

It was not merely that the children of Abraham might enjoy the land of Chanaan, that God let Israel from Egypt. It was that one nation might be set apart, in which, through knowledge and worship of Him, salvation might be obtained. The whole system for this purpose was delivered in a few days. Moses went into the cloud for twice forty days, and brought down to the people. God alone to be loved and worshipped; a brief code of ten moral precepts, containing all duties to God and man, a full system of ecclesiastical law, a minute explanation of the peculiar characteristics of the religion—the doctrine of the clean and unclean; a priesthood, a worship, a ritual, a calendar; all was given at once; and to this (saving additional commemorative festivals, in the course of ages) nothing was ever added.

organisation for the religious life—that is for salvation, was at once effected. To use an expressive foreign expression, the whole was cast at once. It was not hammered out by degrees. Who doubts that the pious Israelite was at once in full possession of all that he needed for salvation? Yet up to this moment, the book of Genesis at most, we may perhaps the book of Job, could alone have been possibly written. By the year forty years the Pentateuch was finished; and then came a succession of books, during which but a few short historical books were added:—Josue, Judges, Ruth, and Samuel or Kings. How were men saved in the meanwhile? How could worship be carried on without the beautiful chaunts of the Church? How could the penitent pour out his wail, without the repentant Church's plaintive strains? How could the afflicted pray for succour, without the inspiration of his sublime appeals to divine justice and mercy? How could the jocund of heart, and priest and Levite in procession, and conquerors returning from a sacred war, make a joyful noise to God, with the Psalms? And yet four hundred years were allowed to pass, before this, so recently to us, necessary portion of the Old Testament was composed, and added to its yet scanty roll; nay before the first appearance of the devotional element in the divine revelation. Yet in that interval how many had been saved? Moses himself, and Aaron, and Phinees, and Josue, and Caleb, and Boon, and Booz, and Ruth, and Jesse, and Samuel, we may piously hope; many thousands more, unrecorded in history. The religious system then on Sinai, not the reading of Scripture, sufficed for this. Every Christian holds, that faith, though shadowy, in a future Redeemer, saved the soul of that system, of a religion embodied in so mystical a shape. How faint, however, are the early adumbrations of this essential object in the first records of inspiration. Even the Psalms give but a twilight to the coming day, compared with the coloured dawn, that shines to shine in the Prophets. And now that we have accustomed ourselves to look back upon the Old Testament as a whole, and see it, not read out, in its slow compilation, over a period of a thousand years and more, but compressed into a small pocket volume, we naturally consider the body of the Prophets, as forming one of its most essential divisions, evidence, for instruction, for edification, and for sublimity of thought. Yet the Jews were doomed to do, aye and to be saved, without it, for good three hundred years more. At that period after David, and seven hundred years after the Jewish religion had been established, Isaias wrote; a hundred years later Jeremias, and after him Ezekiel and Daniel, and several of the Lesser Prophets. Yet not even so, is the sacred volume of the Old Testament complete. When in 1304 after Moses, and only 187 before Christ, Jonathan wrote to the Spartans, "We needed none of these things, saving for our comfort the holy books that are in our hands."† he was perhaps unconscious that he was writing what some years later would form, by incorporation, a portion of those sacred books. About twenty-five years later, or 160 before Christ, the seal was set upon the inspired writings of the older dispensation; and the volume was closed, which had been opened by Moses upwards of 1330 years before.

We have then two important facts before us; the giving of the Jewish

* Fu fatto di getto.

† 1 Mac. xii. 9.

religion was the work of a few hours; the formation of its Scriptures the work of a thousand years. The first resembled the creation of the second the record of his civilisation. The first was life, the culture. Whatever was necessary for life, that is, we repeat, salvific complete at once; the organisation for it could receive no addition. The later Jew could nourish his piety by the royal Psalmist's holy hymns; his descendants could learn wisdom from the Proverbs of Solomon; his despots could pity former generations who had not enjoyed the sublime beauty and the consoling visions of the Prophets. These were like the riches of a prosperous, or rather a providential, system; but life was entire before they were bestowed; its essential requirements grew as they swelled. "Salvation was of the Jews,"* from Moses unto Christ through the observance, in its spirit, of the law delivered by God in the wilderness.

Now let us see, how far the same course was observed, in the best of the second, and better revelation.

As the Spirit of God came down, in the beginning, on the chaotic inchoate, elements of the material world, and fecundating them, predisposing them for organic existence; so did He on the day of Pentecost (the feast of the previous law-giving), descend, with that same power of life, on the component parts, and latent germs, of a new and spiritual, and a divine creation. He touched them, and they lived. In the Apostles, timid, heartless, unwise and misunderstanding, there were laid up the rudiments of the future Church, its primacy, its episcopate, its priesthood, its sacraments, its powers. These had all been bestowed; but as yet appeared to be sealed up in foetal life, within their unconscious bosoms. There too were locked up, commissions of boundless magnitude, to be teachers of the learned, the conquerors of the strong, the confounders of the proud, the salt of the earth, the light of the world. There slumbered in abeyance talents of highest dignity—apostles, martyrs, princes of God's kingdom, fathers of Christ's disciples, judges of Israel, and of angels, foundation-stones, gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. There dwelt, as yet powerless and useless, gifts destined to be of infinite profit to the world; the keys of the kingdom yet hung loose and untried from Peter's girdle; the rich vessels of glory borne away from his Master's bosom, yet remained unbroken, and with odour undiffused, in the heart of John; the evangelical pen was still undipped in the hand of Matthew; miraculous powers, invested in their very shadow with command of life and death, marvellous eloquence, prophecy and discernment of spirits, lie dormant in the souls of all; like Sampson's strength awaiting the spirit that has to rouse it. It was like the preparation for sacrifice under Nehemias; the altar was built up, the wood was laid, the victim slain; but over all was poured, what seemed to be but thick mud and miry water, an hindrance rather than an aid to fire. But soon came one ray of the sun darted upon the materials thus prepared, a brilliant blaze, and a cry of joy, proclaimed that the work of faith was crowned with success.† And so it was here. The appointed hour is come, and a mighty wind announces the approach of God's Holy Spirit; His fire descends on each of them, with a kindling touch; their latent powers burst

* Jo. iv. 22.

† 2 Mac. i. 21.

; their gifts rush into existence; the Church of God, in all its period all its beauty, is born to all the world, and to all ages. Not to Mary and the others who were there in company, three thousand were in a few hours joined to the clergy. As completely as the child is the same as the man of twenty years, so is the Church of Whitby that of the third, or the nineteenth century. There is the whole working machinery complete: it contains already whatever is necessary for its operation. He who joins it this day, may die to-morrow in peace. A hierarchy which is to spread its co-ordinate and harmonious rule over the world is there; and Peter already leads its force, and centres in its union. The body of docile and submissive faithful is gathered round them, not to dispute but to learn. Before evening the first sacrament of baptism, has been administered to multitudes, and the next verse to which so informs us, tells us that they persevered "in the breaking of bread," that is, in the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Sacrament. Soon many came to the Apostles confessing their sins, to obtain forgiveness; soon they placed their hands on the baptised, and gave them the Holy Ghost; soon they ordained new ministers; and soon the sick were visited with oil, and were healed in soul and body.

Thus did the Church, the new means of salvation, come into being, in her perfect and sacramental organisation, as perfectly as did the Jewish Church under Moses. From the beginning were in her all the gifts of life; there was no want of a single instrument for attaining perfection in this world and the brightest crown of glory. Again we ask, by what were men to be saved? By adhering to the pastors of the Church, by practising what they taught, by baptism, by the Eucharist, by the forgiveness of sins, by prayer. And that teaching included all that was necessary in faith, and in a written record. Whatever might be done later, could not invalidate this primitive institution, could not add to the system first established. There was no room for a further revelation. Whatever might be written by a later apostle could only be a record of what was already known, and added; a truly important, sacred invaluable record, a treasure of wisdom, of God, but still incapable of adding to the deposit of faith, safely committed to the Church's keeping.

Five years pass, and not a line is written intended to be permanent. The first Gospel then appears, but fifty more years elapse before the fourth is added to the world. St. John allowed more than sixty to intervene between the death of his Divine Master, and his own record of His life. Who could see, that if his Gospel, certainly the most beautiful and most valuable, had formed a part of a plan essential to salvation, St. John would have risked such a lengthened space, would not have waited till he had become a very aged man, nor trusted to his being delivered from the boiling oil into which he was cast by Domitian, that is, to not having to drink as fully as his brother James of the cup of martyrdom which our Lord had equally pledged them both. It was, in fact, a heresy that prompted him to write: had it come a few years later, or when John's life only reached the apostolic average, we might have been delivered of his heavenly Gospel.

The Divine goodness, however, willed it otherwise, and gave us the many other rich proofs of mercy, of which the New Testament archives. Looking at what we there possess, the knowledge of our life, character, actions, words, and sufferings; the history of the early with its trials and triumphs; the wisdom of the cross, and sublimation on abstruse points of doctrines, as well as the plain lessons homely duties, treasured in St. Paul's Epistles; the one flow of love like balm from its plant, continues inexhaustibly to exude, and disengages itself from every line in St. John's; the particular, but most precious contained in the Catholic Epistles; and the dark but enervating visions of the Apocalypse, bringing down the glories of the new Jerusalem to the level of our earthly imaginations; we cannot but consider it merely as a chance acquisition, but as a necessity for the Church. It is as much used to the enjoyment of all this, as we are to that which it contains. We cannot imagine what we should have done had we been without it, nor what other organ, or instrument, for the apprehension of outward and distant objects, God could have substituted for it. Perhaps we can no more conceive how the spiritual Jew lived before prophecy, or prophecy, had enlightened him. Nor can we well imagine how multitudes of Christians grew to perfection, and died for the faith, before the line of the New Testament had been penned. They heard no doubt fresh from memory, the words and actions of their Lord, but they relied on them from faithful witnesses only; not under the safeguard of inspiration. Might not those reminiscences, written down fresh, with all the diligence and conscientious verifications of a St. Luke, have satisfied the people of future ages as well, and yet inspiration have been withheld? And yet, without faith, Jesus Christ had not promised inspiration to His apostles' words, but He had secured to them infallibility in teaching; and this gift descended, through His own presence and assistance, to the end of the world. Still, with a gratitude which can never be too great, with a reverence cannot be too deep, with a docility which can never be too simple, the Church of God, and each of her children, accepts, cherishes, and prizes the glorious gift of His words to man. It is the very charter of her authority, the store-house of her evidences, the armoury of her defence. It is an inexhaustible repository of her lessons whether of faith, or of moral instruction, a treasure from which she draws out things old yet ever new for our instruction. It is her counsellor, her wisdom, her glory. When she unfolds it, and solemnly reads from it to her children the smallest passage of her Scriptures, she orders the tapers of the sanctuary to burn around it, and she incense to perfume the very atmosphere in which its words shall resound. When the priest kissing the blessed text, whispers his prayer: "Per gelica dicta deleantur nostra delicta," he expresses more confidence in the Gospel of Jesus, than all the speeches in Exeter Hall can match. No man in fact can exceed the value which the Church has ever set, and must continue to set, till the end of time, upon this inestimable inheritance which is exclusively hers, of which she alone holds at once the record and the key.

But she would be departing from her duty, and from the truth, were she to hold out the Scriptures to man, as the appointed channels of salvation. These existed in their fulness before they were written in the Old Testament, before the Bible, in the New before the Testament. Nothing that

than Pentecost could add to the perfect organisation of the Church, sustaining assurance, and means, of eternal life. These means we urge the people committed to our charge. We do not thrust the Bible, by force, into their hands; but we say to them: "Listen to the senses of Scripture as only rightly understood and certainly taught by the true Church of God, to which alone is promised the infallibility of a true direction." We say to them: "Employ the means of grace which were confided to her alone; the ministry of her priesthood, in exhortation, reproof, advice, direction; the devout use of the sacraments committed to her dispensation, especially Penance and the Eucharist: the employment of prayer, meditation, and watchfulness over the conscience. Such are the means by which saving grace was given in the beginning, and will continue to be granted to the end. To Bible reading no such gift has been attached. No difficulty may be raised. As each new book was added to the Canon of the Old Testament, a new obligation was imposed of receiving and believing that book; and so a new condition of salvation was added to the Law. In like manner, the compilation of the New brought with it a new condition in its inspiration and truth, and thus modified the terms of salvation originally granted. Our answer is brief and simple. In each case provision was originally made for the future contingency. In the Old Law, Moses told the people that prophets will arise, and that they must be ready to receive their words. Though the passage principally applies to our Lord, yet it is clearly referable to all prophecy; because it gives the tests for distinguishing the true from the false. "I will raise them up a prophet...and I will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak to them all I shall command him. And he that will not hear his words,...I will be the enemy." * The hearkening then to one who was a true prophet was a precept of the Law, and implicit belief in all future prophecies was involved in its acceptance. Esdras who drew up the first Canon was a prophet. In like manner, the New Law had its provisions for future inspiration. And where? In the belief of that authority which could alone attest inspiration, and sanction a Canon. What the line of prophets was in the Old Law, the unbroken continuance of Divine authority is in the New. When it was said that sixty years intervened between Our Saviour's death, and the completion of the Testament, we might have added, and many more passed before the final settlement of the Canon. St. Paul wrote several other epistles besides those in Scripture, which have not been admitted into it. Who decided which were a part of God's word? Those which are admitted are sent to particular churches, and only travelled slowly from country to country. Who extended them to all? Some churches read Hermas's Pastor, and St. Barnabas's Epistle, with the Scripture. Who caused them to be rejected? Many apocryphal Gospels were circulated at a very early period. Who sifted the wheat from the chaff, and condemned them? Who, in fine, gave to all Christendom, a uniform Canon, and stamped every book in it with authority, vouching for its inspiration? Only the Church, and the work was not fully accomplished for some hundreds of years; not till the age of Councils. It was entirely on faith in the decision of the Church that the Christians grounded the acceptance of those particular books which

* Deut. xviii. 18.

compose the New Testament. Now this principle of believing what the Church should define is the very first and fundamental one laid in the organisation of the Church from the beginning. "He that heareth you, heareth Me." "If he will not hear the Church, let him be unto us as a heathen:" such are the axioms of this organisation of faith. The belief then of the earlier, as of the latter Church in Scripture, and acceptance by both of its Canon, is not a new condition of salvation, only an application of one laid down, at the very births of Judaism and Christianity.

As for ourselves, we refuse to yield to any Protestant, in love and reverence for God's written word. It has been the Book of our predilection from earliest youth; for we had been allowed to peruse it long before childhood. It has been the study of years; nor have we accounted pains or trouble, or time, as anything, if they could help us to know it, and to profit by it. Days and nights have been passed by us, in collecting knowledge subservient to it; and we have read and written not a little, to assist our imperfect power, in defending, illustrating, and applying it. But, instead of all this, and more, leading us to believe that we had fathomed or measured it, it has only made us more and more cling to the inborn and instinctive wisdom of the mother's teaching, as the safest guidance for a child. Deeper and deeper, broader and broader, has this wisdom appeared to us, the more we dived, and the more we sailed, in that ocean of heavenly truth. For everywhere did we meet that directing hand, supporting and conducting, in safety and in joy. The holy Scripture *with* the Church is a book of life; but *without* her, it may be a volume of death. For "the letter killeth;" and that alone does man possess, without the Spirit of life, which she alone receives in the Apostles.*

* 2 Cor. iii. 6, "For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth."

